

BIG 6 FARM

AL PEARSON

5575 Zenith Mill Road
Fort Valley, Georgia 31030
478-825-7504 Fax 478-825-1194

BILL McGEHEE

October 29, 2002

Country of Origin Labeling
Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA
Attn: William T. Sessions, Associate Deputy Administrator
Stop 0249 Room 2092-S
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-0249

Dear Mr. Sessions:

As a grower and shipper of Georgia peaches and pecans, I support the Country of Origin Labeling Bill and have voluntarily labeled my peaches with both state and country of origin for many years. Our industry has invested substantial resources to develop consumer recognition and loyalty for Georgia grown peaches and believe that pecans would benefit from the same recognition; however, as the Bill is written now, it excludes pecans as a covered commodity.

The most recent USDA estimate for imported pecans from Mexico this season is 65 million pounds with the USA expected to produce a little more than 201 million pounds. One of the best ways for consumers to ensure the quality and safety of the food they purchase is to be informed of the country of origin. As imported pecans represent a substantial percentage of pecans that are available to the consumer, I encourage the USDA to reconsider its position on pecans and have them included in the "covered commodity" definition in Subtitle D - Country of Origin Labeling.

Sincerely,



Al Pearson

ALP/vfh